

Jacques Bergier

Jacques Bergier (French: [bɛʁʒje]; born **Yakov Mikhailovich Berger**; Russian: Яков Миха́йлович Бе́ргер; Odessa, August 8, 1912 – November 23, 1978, Paris), was a chemical engineer, member of the French-resistance, spy, journalist and writer. He co-wrote the best-seller *The Morning of the Magicians* with Louis Pauwels of fantastic realism.

Early life

Yakov Mikhailovich Berger, who later adopted the name **Jacques Bergier**,^[1] was born in Odessa in 1912. Mikhail Berger, his father, was a Jewish wholesale grocer and his mother, Etlia Krzeminiecka, was a former revolutionary. A granduncle of his was a miraculous rabbi and in his autobiography, *Je ne suis pas une légende*,^[2] Bergier says he was a cousin of nuclear physicist George Gamow and of a certain Anatoly, a member of the firing squad that shot Tsar Nicholas II.

He was a gifted child: at two he read his first newspaper and at four he could easily read Russian, French and Hebrew. He was a speed reader (until the end of his life he could read 4 to 10 books per day) and had an eidetic memory. He was a vivacious child, and he told fabulous sounding stories of discussing strategy with generals as well as talking with street prostitutes in Odessa. He never went to school but had private tutors.

In 1920 the Russian Civil War forced the Berger family to take refuge in Etlia's homeland in Krzemeiniec, Northwestern Ukraine. Young Yakov Mikhailovich went to a Talmudic school and he became enthralled with the study of the Kabbalah and its mysteries. Besides that he studied mathematics, physics, German and English. He read everything he could lay hands on, but his favourite reading was science fiction.

In 1925 the family moved to France.

He became an assistant to the noted French atomic physicist André Helbronner who was killed by the Gestapo towards the end of World War II. According to Walter Lang, Bergier was approached by Fulcanelli with a message for Helbronner about man's possible use of nuclear weapons. The meeting took place in June 1937 in a laboratory of the Gas Board in Paris.^[3]

Work

In 1954 Bergier met Louis Pauwels, a writer and editor, in Paris. They would later collaborate on the book, *Le Matin des Magiciens* which was published in France in 1960. This book takes the reader on a neo-surrealistic tour of modern European history focusing on the purported influence of the occult and secret societies on politics. It also attempts to connect alchemy with nuclear physics, hinting that early alchemists understood more about the actual function of atoms than they are credited.

Le Matin des Magiciens was very popular with the youth culture in France through the 1960s and 1970s. It was translated into English by Rollo May in 1963 under the title *The Dawn of Magic*. It first appeared in the USA in paperback form in 1968 as *The Morning of the Magicians*. This book spawned an entire genre of explorations into many of the ideas it raised, such as connections between Nazism and the occult. It has become a cult classic, often referenced by conspiracy theory enthusiasts and those interested in ideas of forbidden history and occult studies. The question remains: how much inside knowledge did Pauwels and Bergier really have, or how much of their thesis was merely imaginative invention? Either way, their magical mystery tour of the dialectic between materialism and metaphysics continues to influence researchers in this field today.

Pauwels and Bergier collaborated on two later books of essays, *Impossible Possibilities* and *The Eternal Man*. They also co-produced a journal called *Planète* which explored esoteric ideas. Bergier was interested in the possibilities of extraterrestrial life and explored reported sightings of UFOs.

Jacques Bergier died in November, 1978 saying of himself: "I am not a legend."

References

- [1] In his autobiography, Bergier tells that it was a transliteration error from a Polish official that turned his surname into "Bergier" (in Russian "e" is read "ye"). "Jacques" is the French for Yakov (in Russian and Hebrew).
 - [2] *I'm Not A Legend*.
 - [3] Powell, Neil *Alchemy, the Ancient Science*, p. 53, Aldus Books Ltd, London, 1976 SBN 490 00346 X
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